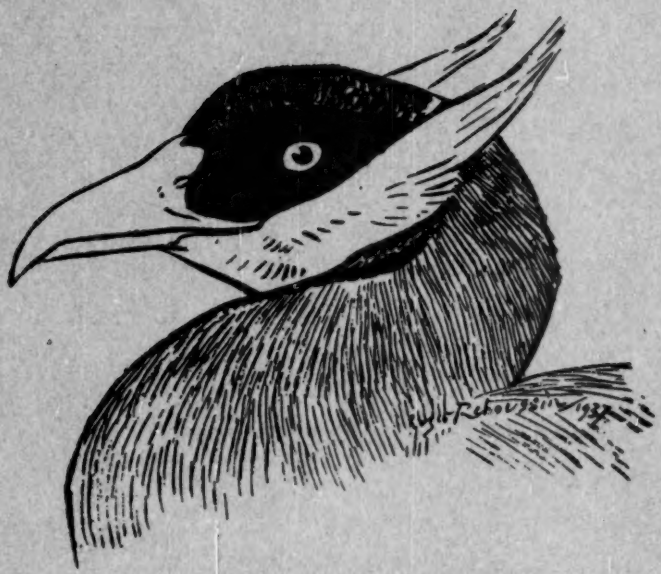
# AVICULTURAL MAGAZINE



## PHEASANT NUMBER

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VOL. 55 No. 6 PRICE 5/- NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1949

# THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

*Founded* 1894

PRESIDENT: A. EZRA, ESQ., O.B.E.

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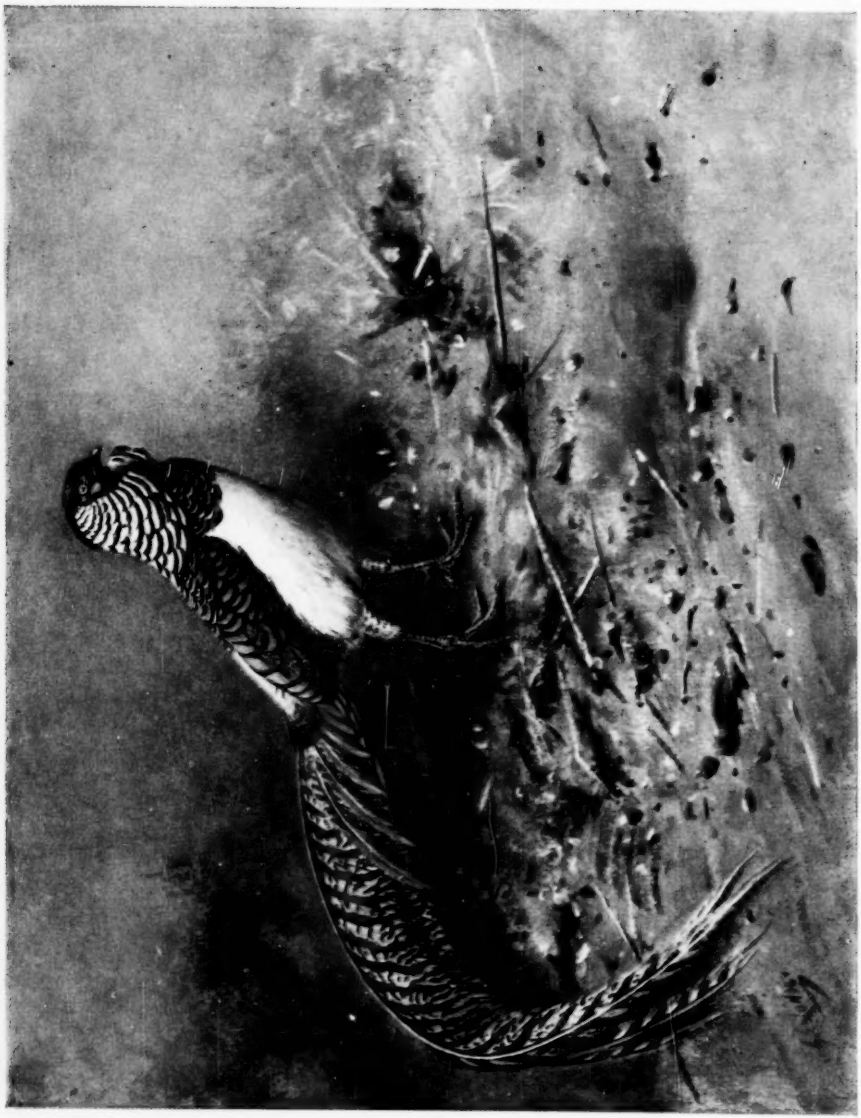
## POST-MORTEM EXAMINATIONS

RULE 1. A short account of the illness should accompany the specimen. All birds to be sent as fresh as possible to Mr. W. Lawrence, The Zoological Society of London, Regent's Park, London, N.W. 8.

RULE 2. A fee of 10*s.* and a stamped addressed envelope must be enclosed with the bird.

RULE 3. No body or skin of any bird will be returned under any circumstances whatever.



Cock Amherst Pheasant.

# AVICULTURAL MAGAZINE

THE JOURNAL OF THE
AVICULTURAL SOCIETY

**Vol. 55.—No. 6.**—*All rights reserved.* **NOVEMBER–DECEMBER, 1949**

## THE AMHERST PHEASANT

(*Chrysolophus amherstiæ*)

By DAVID SETH-SMITH, M.B.O.U.

With the scarcity of all Ornamental Pheasants as well as other birds desired by aviculturists, the Amherst Pheasant is once more regarded, as it always should be, as one of, if not *the* most beautiful as well as desirable of the whole group to which it belongs. That is if one wishes for a thing of beauty rather than an object of sport, for as such it has never been a success. It has been introduced into coverts where Pheasants were preserved for sport and has proved hardy and prolific but tended to drive out other Pheasants which were far more useful. It is not in any sense a utility Pheasant but as an aviary bird it has few equals, being as hardy as any, a free breeder, and extremely beautiful.

The native home of the Amherst Pheasant is Western China and Tibet, and it was first described, by Leadbeater, in 1828 from two living examples presented by the King of Ava to Sir Archibald Campbell and by him to Lady Amherst, who kept them for a time in India before bringing them to England. Both were cocks and did not survive for very long, and it was not until some forty years later that half a dozen specimens, of which only one was a hen, reached the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park. Others came later, and the bird became popular. It was at once evident that it was a close relation of the Golden Pheasant, a species that had been well known in this country for many years. It proved to be as easily bred in captivity as that species and the two, being very closely allied, were found to cross freely. Some of the hybrids are certainly of startling appearance and were at first regarded as things of great beauty, but, to my mind, are less beautiful than either of the parent species. No doubt some of these crosses were produced as a result of the scarcity of Amherst hens, but many from a mistaken notion that Nature could be improved upon. Crossing has done wonders in horticulture, but in the zoological world it is rarely a success and in the case of these two Pheasants it has proved disastrous and really pure-bred Amherst Pheasants are now much scarcer than the hybrids. Any Pheasant keeper who has them

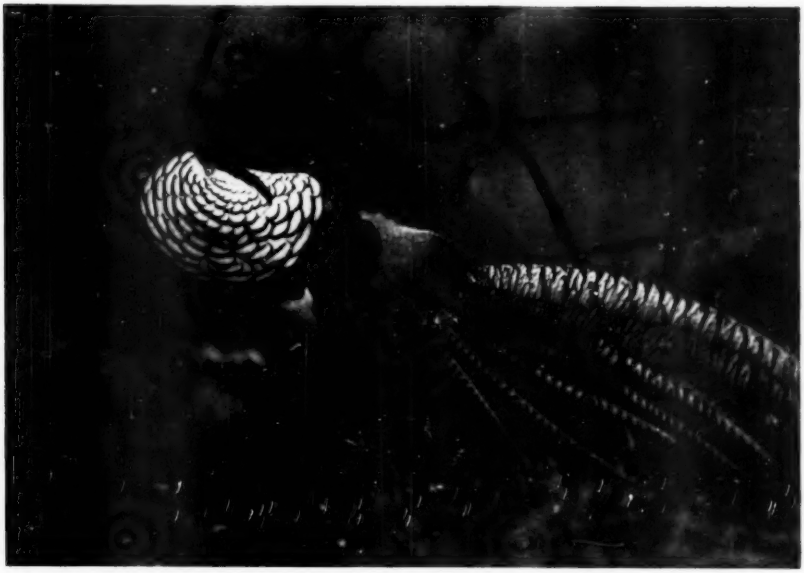
should regard them as great treasures and be careful to keep them pure. It is not difficult to distinguish a pure cock Amherst from one with traces of the Golden, but not so easy to be sure of the purity of the hen, for the hens of the two are much alike though readily distinguishable by the expert. Hybrid cocks always show traces of red either on the flanks or abdomen.

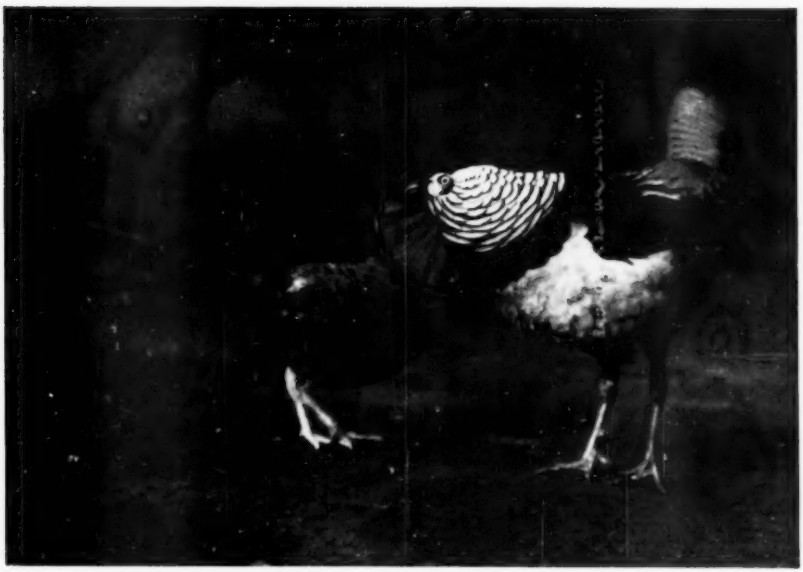
Perhaps the most characteristic feature of the cocks of the two species of *Chrysolophus* is the tippet, or ruff which, in the Amherst, is white, each feather being margined with a band of dark green. The breast and back are metallic green, each feather tipped with black. The under parts are white, the rump yellow, a certain amount of red on the tail-coverts, while the broad tail itself is white banded with black, the two central feathers being of a lace-like texture. The forehead is green and the crest crimson, the skin of the face blue and the legs and feet lead-coloured. The Amherst hen is somewhat larger than that of the Golden and the dark bars on her plumage are broader.

As already mentioned, the Amherst is a free breeder and, unlike many species of Pheasant, the hens will readily incubate their eggs provided their aviary is spacious and furnished with ample cover. In fact, without these conditions the cock is only too likely to kill the hen, especially if there is only one. There should be four or five hens to one cock in a breeding pen as the polygamous cock is far too vigorous to be content with only one mate.

The display of the cock Amherst to his mate is very similar to that of the Golden and is a beautiful and interesting performance. With mincing steps he runs around her, suddenly stopping and spreading his whole body sideways so as to present the most striking of his colours. The broad tail is spread, the body flattened so as to show the upper side, and the tippet opened out like a fan on the side nearest to the object of his attention, forming an almost complete circle with the eye in the centre. Suddenly he rushes around in the opposite direction and, approaching his mate, again spreads his plumage on the side nearest to her. This performance goes on for quite a long time each day during the height of the breeding season and, as one watches this wonderful bird showing off his exquisite plumage, one realizes why it has been called the " Flower Pheasant ", a title perhaps equally applicable to the only other member of the genus.

Although both of these Pheasants will, under favourable conditions, incubate their own eggs and rear their young, the usual practice with Pheasant keepers is to remove the eggs and give them in charge of light hens of which, perhaps, the most reliable type is a cross between the silkie and some clean-legged breed of bantam. At the Zoo we used to employ a silkie-jungle-fowl cross. The method is more certain than leaving the eggs to the Pheasant though hardly such true aviculture.





*Copyright*] [*D. Seth-Smith*

COCK AMHERST PHEASANT DISPLAYING

[*To face p. 198.*

# THE PHEASANT REGISTRY, 1949

By George A. J. Weaver, F.Z.S.

It will be remembered that about two years ago the first census of Ornamental Pheasants, Peafowl, and Junglefowl was undertaken to ascertain the approximate numbers and species still maintained in these Islands, and it is due to the resulting information that many odd birds have changed ownership. It was hoped that with the pairing up of these odd birds a substantial increase in numbers would be seen the following year, but unfortunately the wet summer produced low fertility and a further count was not deemed worthwhile. So far 1949 has proved more encouraging, and probably the best news received to date comes from Leckford where a nice batch of Swinhoe chicks have been reared. This success should greatly help in re-establishing one of the rarer species (certainly as far as this country is concerned), the 1947 count showing but 23 individuals surviving in the British Isles. It has been decided to again take a count, and at the same time compile detailed information on feeding under post-war conditions, possible reasons for low fertility, and general impressions on the state of pens and enclosures. Fanciers, be their stock one or one hundred, are once more asked to give their support to this scheme by returning Registry Forms as soon as possible, at the same time stating " wants " or birds for disposal.

Perhaps a few notes on the activities of Pheasant lovers across the Atlantic may be of interest to fanciers here. It is pleasing to hear that these birds are flourishing in America, species such as the Silver, Golden, and Amherst being far too numerous to arrive at an approximate figure. Others which we in England now term as rare, including Elliot's, Swinhoe's, Blue and Brown Crossoptilans, Firebacks, Tragopans, and Peacock Pheasants are kept and breed in fair numbers, as may be gathered by the following specimen advertisement taken from a current number of *Modern Gamebreeding*, and which is but one of dozens that may be found in the pages of this periodical.

**ORDERS SOLICITED FOR PHEASANTS**

Golden, Swinhoe, Edwards, Germains, Impeyan,
Mongolian, Formosan, Cheer, White, W. C.
Kaleege, Siamese, Fireback, Black-Throated
Golden, Bels, Chinese, Blackneck, Reeves',
Blue and Brown Mancurian, Amherst,
Elliot's, Silver Lineated, Mutants.

. . . . . **Pheasant Farm,** . . . . **Calif.**

Surely an item to make any Pheasant lover in England feel envious and long for better days.

One of the foremost establishments breeding Pheasants in the U.S.A. is the Circle H Ranch, where a large and varied collection is maintained by the owner Mr. Claude Hooke. Probably the only remaining pairs of White Crossoptilans are to be found here although there are a number of odd birds of this species to be found in other collections. Another rare species represented by at least a pair is the Malayan Argus whilst most others that we in England regard as scarce are kept by Mr. Hooke.

A past Secretary of the American O.P.S., Mr. A. F. Sturgis, includes the following birds in his collection at Philadelphia. Cheer, Elliot's, Blue, Brown, and White Crossoptilans, Imperials, Impeyans, Mikado, and Temminck's and Satyr Tragopans.

Mr. Lawrence Taylor, the present Yearbook editor to the above Society, has a representative collection and the latest news to hand is that Elliot's were hatching well and Impeyans were laying. The Bel's unfortunately died in the shell. Some interesting information has been given me by this gentleman concerning the feeding of ground-up alfalfa hay to Pheasants. This hay, which is a type of clover, contains a high protein content, and is used throughout the country by sheep and dairy farms, also in the large Turkey and game Pheasant establishments. With present day difficulties in procuring feed for livestock, any alternative that proves beneficial deserves consideration. Have any members here tried this? If so may we hear the results? Mr. Taylor has until recently numbered White Crossoptilans among his many birds and was successful in breeding from them for several seasons, the chicks, however, dying suddenly when about two weeks old. An expert from a proprietary Game Bird Food concern was consulted and gave his opinion that these losses were due to gizzard erosion.

Mr. D. W. Rich of the Golden West Pheasantry of San Gabriel also deserves mention, species of special interest at this establishment being Malayan Crested Firebacks and Grey Junglefowl.

Mr. Rudkin of Fillmore, California, has an interesting collection including Swinhoe's, Elliot's, and Germains Peacock Pheasants. Ten young were reared from the latter in 1947 and perhaps of note is the number of Specifer Peafowl reared that season, 12 from a male and two females. Incidentally the Specifer Peafowl is fairly well established in America and this may be due to the fact that the majority are kept in better climatic conditions than we in England can expect. This gentleman also has a number of the other varieties of Peafowl, his Whites bringing up fifteen young and the Common a similar number. A few records from Canadian fanciers have also come to hand and again we find Swinhoe's, Elliot's and Impeyans in fair numbers. Mr. G. R.

Marshall of Hamilton keeps these, together with the commoner species all more or less breeding fairly well.

I have been able to contact a number of Zoological Institutions in America regarding their Pheasant collections and the following is a brief account of the more outstanding species.

The Philadelphia Zoo has approximately 18 species, Siamese Crested Firebacks, Blue and Brown Crossoptilans, Cheer, and Satyr Tragopans being of particular note.

New York Zoo can show 33 species some of which must be almost the only representatives in captivity. The " plums " of this collection are Malayan, Bornean, and Siamese Crested Firebacks, two Rheinarts Argus, one Great Argus, and two Imperial. Others include White Crested, Black Crested, and Lineated Kalij, Germains Peacock Pheasant, Cheer, White Crossoptilan, and Elliot's. The General Curator, Mr. Lee S. Crandall has kindly compiled a list of species kept in the U.S.A. together with his estimated strength of each species which may give a further indication as to the position there.

*Common.*—Golden, Amherst, Silver, White Crested Kalij, Black Backed Kaleege, Black Crested Kaleege, Swinhoe's, Reeves', Elliot's, Cheer, Siamese Crested Fireback, Blue Crossoptilans all varieties of Peafowl, and Red Junglefowl.

*Fairly Common.*—Mikado, Impeyan, Temmincks Tragopan, Germains Peacock Pheasant, White Crossoptilans, Edwards.

*Scarce.*—Lineated, Horsfields, Copper, Grey Peacock Pheasant, Imperial, Satyr Tragopan, Malayan and Bornean Crested Firebacks, Brown Crossoptilans, Sonnerats, Javan, and Ceylon Junglefowl.

*Rare.*—Malayan and Crested Argus.

Mr. Sturgis who, as mentioned above was at one time secretary to the O.P.S., more or less confirms this list although he excludes Copper and includes Palawan Peacock Pheasants and Bornean Argus. It would appear that Blyth's and Cabot's Tragopans, the Crestless Firebacks, and Bronze Tailed Peacock Pheasants have completely disappeared and some of the rarer species are more or less confined to zoos where there are no facilities for breeding. However, as can be seen, the position is most encouraging as far as the majority of species are concerned and we trust that when restrictions lift our American friends will be in the position to send us the fresh blood we so badly need.

To revert to our own problems, materials for building pens appear a little easier to come by and it may be a good idea, whilst waiting for stock to become available, to proceed with the construction of any pens contemplated and plant same with suitable cover. Thus growth may become well established which will be found a great advantage when turning out fresh acquisitions, for it will not only be an encouragement to breed but will obviate to some extent the damage to

grass and small shrubs that usually results on releasing birds in newly planted enclosures.

Pheasant enthusiasts may be interested to hear that M. Delacour has completed in manuscript form his work *Pheasants of the World* and that it should be published towards the end of the year or early in 1950, matters being delayed somewhat by the time required in executing the plates. This valuable book will contain 20 maps, 16 coloured and 16 black and white plates by J. C. Harrison and as the majority of these illustrations will show five birds, most species and sub-species will be pictured. Imperial, Salvadori's, Crested Argus, and Congo Peacock, which are not found in Beebe's monograph, will each have a plate to itself, a welcome addition to the existing works of reference. In giving this information to the American O.P.S. on 5th January, M. Delacour at the same time remarked on the lack of accurate data regarding the successive plumages and life habits of many species commonly kept in captivity and urged breeders to make notes of their birds behaviour, etc., for future reference. British ornithologists and aviculturists have always been to the fore in their detailed accounts and keen observation of birds, and we should not let this be an exception. If members will send such information to me, I will gladly compile a record of same and publish in this Magazine at a later date. Data is required under the following headings :—

BEHAVIOUR. DISPLAY. MATING. VOICE. FEEDING HABITS. SHAPE AND COLOUR OF EGGS (Size in cmm. if possible). INCUBATION PERIODS. COLOUR AND MARKINGS OF DOWNY CHICKS, FIRST YEAR PLUMAGE, MOULTS, etc.

Will everyone owning Pheasants, irrespective of species kept, please assist in this additional inquiry and further the cause of science ?

* * *

# THE REARING OF ORNAMENTAL PHEASANTS AND WATERFOWL

By Jos. R. Lowes

I am writing this article on the method adopted by me for the rearing of my Pheasants and Waterfowl, hoping to be able to pass on some information which will enable some of my fellow members to save many chicks and ducklings which otherwise would be lost through feeding and attempting to rear on food which is unsuitable to them and against nature itself. Do let us follow nature as much as possible and think for a while what the birds are reared on in their wild state whether in the jungle or otherwise and until such times as they are old enough to judge for themselves regarding their likes and dislikes. It is during those critical first two weeks of their existence on which I want to dwell and let us ask ourselves " what do they feed on in their natural habitat ". The answer is insects ! Their first feed is insects caught by their mother and offered to the chicks and ducklings from time to time until they begin to look for them on their own accord ; and so they carry on living on insects until they become older and require a change of diet suitable to them and perhaps more easily obtained but it is those first two weeks which are the making or breaking of a Pheasant's or Duck's life. Many are lost in the early stages of their life due to that lack of thought and by trying to force them to eat food which is unsuitable and does not agree with their delicate digestive system. I like to study my young stock and find through experience that the method I use, and shall continue to use, and also pass on to others, is within the reach of every fancier to-day whether he or she has only a pen of Goldens or twenty pens of a varied collection. This season I have again been successful with my rearing of ornamental pheasants which include Goldens, Silvers, Reeves, Temmincks Tragopans, Blue Crossoptilan, Edwards, Swinhoe, and Jungle Fowl, also this season I have introduced ornamental waterfowl and am the proud possessor of 22 Carolina and Mandarin Ducklings.

I can hear some of my fellow members saying " yes, but what about your losses " ; well, my losses have been 2 Pheasants and 2 Ducks and these deaths were due to the broodie crushing them when first put out in the coops, since then my losses have been nil. As many of you know, through past experience, that one does get a clumsy broodie once in a while and you cannot avoid accidents. I lost many of my Pheasants during the war through bombing but now I am making up for lost time with the aid of Mother Nature who is the provider of my requirements so essential to our young stock. By this I mean Fresh Ant Eggs, no secret, only common sense, and by this method of feeding I have not only saved many of my chicks but I know I am giving them

something which they need so much and at the same time know that it will not upset their little stomachs. In addition green food is provided at all times as some Pheasant chicks eat more than others.

After the chicks are hatched out, dried, and well on their feet, I transfer them into the meadow in a coop with run attached, give them nothing for at least 36 hours when by that time they are beginning to look round for something to eat.

That something is a tin containing ants eggs which I have previously collected in readiness, and by dropping a few beside the broodie, who will in most cases pick one up and call the chicks to her and at the same time almost saying " look what I have got for you " she will then drop it, when it will be at once picked up by the strongest chick first, then as the others strengthen there is a rush for who has to be first to secure the tit-bit. They will only take a few the first feed or so but these they increase as they go along until I give them 5 feeds per day ; the first as early as possible and the last as late as possible, with clean fresh water available at all times. By the end of the first week when the runs are taken away (in some cases earlier), it is noticeable how they will run towards you knowing that you are bringing them something which they enjoy and relish at all times no matter how the day or what the time.

Well, we have got the first week over and all is well, with the chicks growing and feathering to satisfaction, but now we must think of introducing other food and reducing the ants eggs. I use a good quality biscuit meal which can be obtained in 3 sizes, small, medium, and large and into this is added a small quantity of C.L.O. which is first class in helping the chicks through with their crown feathers ; moisten the biscuit meal with boiling water, allow it to cool before feeding, then add a little meat, meal, and ants eggs ; these they will pick out first, but eventually begin to take the biscuit meal, etc., but each day now I reduce the quantity of ants eggs until by the end of the second week they are completely on another diet. If you have an unlimited supply of ants eggs near by, then my advice is " carry on " with them as long as the supply lasts, there is nothing better, and by this method, whether you are rearing on a free range or confined to pens and aviaries your losses will be very small indeed and many of the rarer species of Pheasants will be saved, not only that, it is cheap and it is the ideal feed for rearing Pheasant chicks. This method applies also to the rearing of ornamental ducks with only enough water to drink, having almost filled their drinking tin with small stones which only allows them to get a little water between the stones, until after the first week ; if then they are growing well and strong I place a 6 inch kitchen sink in their run, drop it to the level of the ground and fill it with water ; here they need only be watched a little while to know that they are happy and content and if a few ants eggs are thrown into the

water they soon make short work of them. How many will say " where are we to get the ants eggs ? Well, there are many counties in England where there is an abundance of these, especially in heavily wooded districts and it only requires a little time and labour ; but at the same time you know that what chicks you lost last year will this time be saved. Also a few inquiries made in your district will provide you with the required information. Failing this, an advertisement in the local paper will most likely do the trick. I feel I must warn you here, that it is not all plain sailing gathering ants eggs and perhaps if my advice is followed it might save a little discomfort at times. First of all, having learnt where there are some ant hills be sure to buy a pair of rubber gloves, because on opening the ant hill, the ants at once put up a fine spray of formic acid which coming in contact with your bare hands will destroy the outer layer of skin which all peels off in the course of a few days, so by using a pair of rubber gloves you will save this ; also use a pair of trouser clips to fasten the trouser bottoms. Open up the ant hill and there near the surface you will find an abundance of fresh ant eggs which you place in a tin complete with lid. Here I must leave the collecting of ants eggs because I am getting away from the theme of my article but if any member cares to write to me I shall be only too glad to give them a plan to follow ; but what I do wish to point out in conclusion, do let us take advantage of this method of rearing our rarer species of Pheasant and Duck rather than try to rear them on something which upsets their digestion and I am writing from past experience and hoping to be able to pass on what I have found a great success. If it has to be that you have to buy a few ants eggs to start off your Impeyans or Tragopans etc., surely it is more satisfactory to spend 30 shillings for ants eggs and save your chicks than to spend £3 on something unsuitable and lose them, but I do know from letters received from time to time that this is happening. Here I must state that I do not sell ants eggs ! This method of rearing does not only apply to our ornamental Pheasants, but also to our Game Pheasant, which owing to Government restrictions placed upon the buying of foodstuffs have to be reared by nature's method, and in my capacity of Head Keeper one can, and has done, during the past war, shot 470 wild Pheasants in one day simply because two of the most essential things were kept foremost in our minds, i.e. keeping down the vermin and allowing nature to provide the food in the way of insects ; later, of course, when insect food begins to get short we have in our Pheasant a great specialist in adaptation and throughout the season they can turn their attention regarding food to whatever comes along in rotation, but try always, if possible, to allow your chicks a free range ; I know it is not always convenient to do so, if space is confined, then make a practice of moving your coops and runs once a day onto fresh ground, then after the rearing season is over, give your ground a good

dose of lime which will then sweeten the ground ready for another season. Again, let me once more stress the importance of fresh insect food especially in the early stages, you will also find that you will also be free from stomach and bowel complaints, particularly indigestion, and many of our ornamental Pheasant chicks die of this through giving them food which soon goes sour especially in hot weather.

Since starting to write this article my Chukar Partridges have hatched out, nine of them, and now they are a week old and being fed as stated and doing well. If you notice your chicks are nice and tight in the feather then you know all is well, but once they begin to fluff out and drop their wings a little then look out for trouble, they refuse whatever you are feeding with and take no interest in life whatever and perhaps by morning they are dead, due to indigestion. I may state I have purposely fed three Golden chicks this year on inferior feeding stuff until they showed these signs ; at once I have caught them up, given a dose of oil, hungered them for 12 hours, then started them off on ants eggs and within 24 hours they were in their usual health again, so do let us put away the custard pan, etc., and think for a moment what a sight it would be to see a brood of ornamental Pheasant chicks going through the jungle with the broodie carrying all the pans and tins, etc., which some people still persist in providing for such a sick and complicated diet. Remember you can kill your chicks with kindness.

* * *

## REMINISCENCES OF A PHEASANT FANCIER

By G. Beever

Having previously written several articles on pheasants for the Avicultural Magazine, I find it difficult to write anything really new. However when I look back on my experiences, I come to the conclusion that it was an extremely lucky day for me when I became a fancier of these wonderful birds.

From the first day that I owned a pair of Goldens in 1919, I became thoroughly infected with the pheasant " bug ". I spent all my spare time building aviaries, writing to various people for information on the subject, visiting libraries, zoos, and museums, in search of anything that would improve my knowledge of the birds.

If I saw advertisements of any new arrivals in London or Liverpool, I often took the first chance to go and see them, although at that time I could not afford to buy any but the cheaper kinds. People thought I was completely mad to travel two hundred miles to see a few pheasants. Eventually I became a member of the Avicultural Society

and this in turn enabled me to make the acquaintance of other members interested in the birds. Many of these are still my friends. I also made acquaintances in France and the United States which resulted in my visiting these countries.

One of the bright lights of my pheasant experiences was when I took a party of thirty to Clères in 1937 to see Mr. Delacour's wonderful collection of pheasants and other birds. It was a most perfect day and everyone was charmed with the chateau and grounds, apart from the birds. During the walk round the park one gentleman said to me, " Well, this is the nearest thing to Paradise that I have ever seen." The collection at that time was at its best.

Besides the pheasants which included some rare species like the Mikado, Palawan Peacock Pheasant, and White Crossoptilon, we saw numerous parrots at liberty and a large collection of ducks, cranes, and other waterfowl. Perhaps the most interesting bird was a Crowned Crane that accompanied us all the afternoon, and when we posed for our photographs at the end of the tour, the Crane stood right in the middle of the congregation.

Being a Pheasant fancier was also the cause of my visiting the U.S.A. on three occasions. About 1926 I began to correspond with the late Mr. Denley of Washington D.C. Every time he wrote to me he asked me to pay a visit to U.S.A. to stay with him ; at last I decided to go, as I could not possibly say no any longer.

I went in 1929, 1931, and 1939. He had a wonderful collection and bought every species of pheasant procurable. I saw there the only pair of Koklass I have ever seen. Whilst in U.S.A. I have on different occasions visited New York, Philadelphia, Washington, and Detroit zoos also the Kellog Sanctuary at Battle Creek.

When I started with pheasants, literature on the subject was very scarce, but the publication of Beebe's Monograph fulfilled a long felt want, and the splendid coloured plates enable present-day fanciers to form an opinion of the beauty of the different species. In some old books the plates and drawings of Goldens and other Pheasants are simply atrocious and often incorrect.

It is a pity that the Ornamental Pheasant Society has ceased to function, as the magazine published by the society contained valuable information that had never been in print previously. I have always been immensely interested in the discovery of new species and in the importation of species previously recorded but not imported.

During my thirty years as a fancier, several beautiful species have been imported that in my wildest dreams I never expected seeing. Amongst these I can think of Bulwers White Tailed Pheasant, Palawan Peacock Pheasant, Mikado, Rheinarts Argus, and Edwards. A few species previously unrecorded have also been imported, such as Imperial, Bels, and several new varieties of the Kalij group. No

doubt when Mr. Delacour writes his new book, we shall hear about the latest new and sub-species of Pheasants.

I am also very impatient for information about the Congo Peacock and wonder whether I shall live long enough to see a live one in captivity.

My object in writing this short article is to show that a hobby like pheasant-owning adds to the variety of life and brings friends, acquaintances, and experiences that add enormously to the pleasures of living.

* * *

## THE CONGO PEACOCK IN CAPTIVITY

By LEE S. CRANDALL

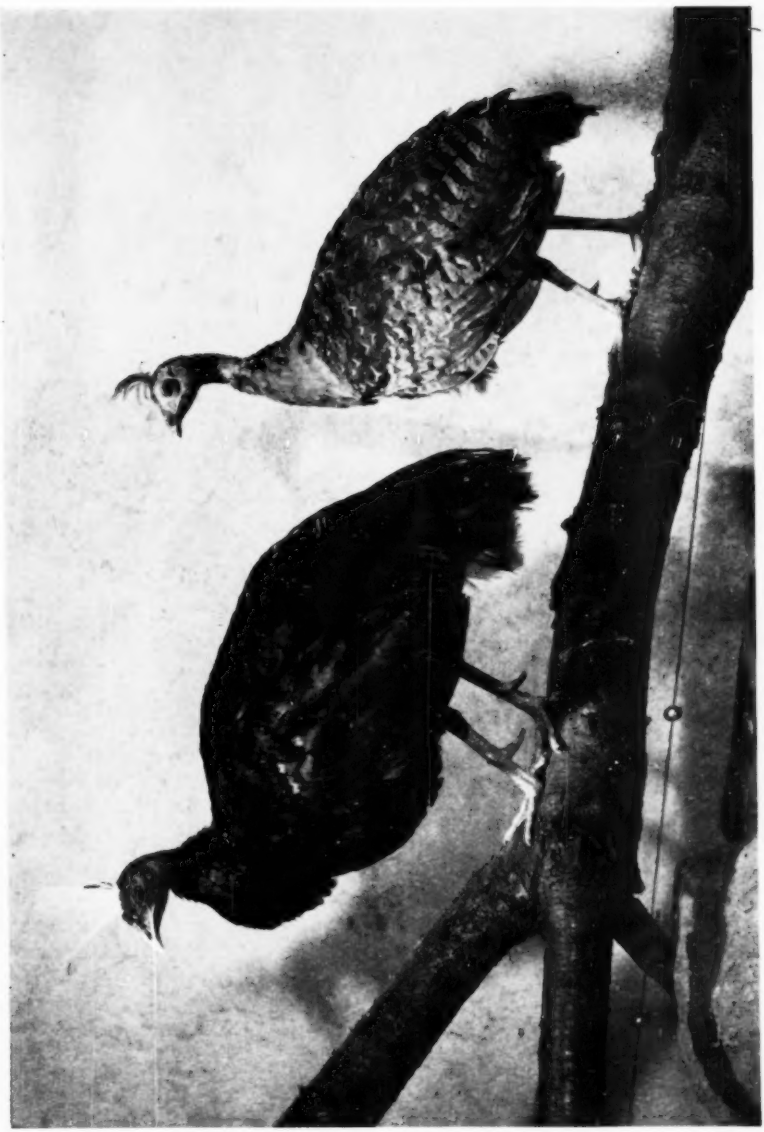
(General Curator, New York Zoological Park)

When Charles Cordier, the well-known collector, went to the Belgian Congo in the interests of the New York Zoological Society, his principal objective was the Congo Peacock (*Afropavo congensis*). That was in October, 1947, and it was not until 15th June, 1949, that the shipment finally arrived, by air, in New York. A broken leg, coupled with the innumerable other vicissitudes that beset the collector in Africa, delayed the return but did not prevent final success. For besides many other zoological treasures, Cordier proudly displayed seven Congo Peacocks, the first living specimens to be seen outside Africa.

It is still too early to forecast what the future of these birds may be. There were five adult cocks, a chick of 1949, already showing cock plumage and a single hen. During the remainder of the summer, the birds were kept in small planted outdoor aviaries. What seemed to be the best cock was run with the hen, three of the remaining cocks were kept together, and the fourth, suspected of truculence, remained alone. The cocks were noticeably apathetic, and definitely on the dull side. The hen was much more alert and tighter in plumage. All were quite tame and not easily frightened.

In mid-October, the birds were taken indoors for the winter, all of the cocks in one pen, the pair in another. Once in dry, warm quarters, all immediately responded with tighter plumage and improvement in general appearance. If they winter well, we shall have confirmed or disproved our feeling that cocks are not inclined to quarrel. And another spring will bring opportunity to test the possibilities of breeding in captivity.

Feeding has been chiefly on greens, fruits, vegetables, and pheasant biscuit, with a little grain. Our brief experience indicates that the Congo Peacock is not too difficult in captivity and that its requirements more or less parallel those of the Argus Pheasants, with the added advantage that odd cocks at least seasonally, will live together.



[*New York Zoo*

Cock and Hen Congo Peacocks in New York Zoo

*Copyright*]

[*To face p. 208.*

# THE MUTATION *OBSCURUS* IN THE LADY AMHERST PHEASANT

By Professor A. GHIGI

It is several years since I thought of introducing in the Lady Amherst Pheasant the mutation which produces the dark plumage in the Golden Pheasant, a mutation known as *obscurus*. To secure this I mated a black-throated Golden Pheasant (*obscurus*) with a Lady Amherst hen of very pure strain. It is known that the character *obscurus* is recessive in conjunction with the normal Golden Pheasant; thus all the young resulting from this pair were identical with those which are obtained if the two species, Golden and Lady Amherst are crossed. But these hybrids produced, following the Mendel law, a quarter of young which were completely *obscurus*.

When the two *obscurus* cocks which I reared attained their adult plumage, I was surprised by the remarkable differences to their hybrid parents and their grandparents of pure strain. I will not repeat the detailed description which I have published in *Acta Pontificiæ Academiæ Scientiarum*, and I will confine myself to saying that both of them had a white crest, and that one had a dark grey belly separated from the greenish-black neck by a band of light grey, while the other had all the underparts entirely black.

These birds were adult in 1944, when the Germans occupied Bologna and my house. It was necessary to place several Pheasants in unsuitable accommodation, and the two black cocks F.2 *obscurus* × *amherstiæ* died, and were made into skins.

Of this lot I was left with a single *obscurus* hen, which I was not able to mate with a pure Lady Amherst cock until this year (1949). She has laid twenty-five eggs, of which half were incubated, producing eight young of light colour as if they had been the result of an ordinary cross *amherstiæ* × (*pictus* × *amherstiæ*).

Unfortunately a polecat killed five of these birds, and I have only a cock and two hens left. From this lot I expect one dark mutant against three normal hybrids having three-quarters Amherst and a quarter Golden blood; but the mutation *obscurus* can change the entire system of coloration in an unforeseen manner.

It is curious that the melanistic mutation should be dominant in the genus *Phasianus*, while it is recessive in the genus *Chrysolophus*. In the first case it is susceptible of selection by at least two degrees, while in *Chrysolophus pictus* it does not appear to have the differences of degree, but in both cases the chicks have more or less extended white spots which disappear when the full plumage is assumed.

* * *

# PHEASANTS IN CAPTIVITY

By TERRY JONES

I am writing this article with some diffidence because I have no long experience of Pheasant rearing and in fact I have only entirely by myself reared Golden and Silver Pheasants, and that was fifteen or twenty years ago. It seems to me that generally speaking there must be something fundamentally wrong with the way Pheasants are usually reared and kept in captivity. Each year one hears about bad fertility and it seems universal. This in itself is perhaps the most striking feature of the unnaturalness of the captive stocks. Pheasants (and as far as Britain and the colder countries are concerned I am not including the tropical Pheasants in these generalizations) were by nature intended to be very fecund birds. They laid large clutches of eggs and HATCHED big broods ; vermin, weather, and parasites thinned their numbers. Nature never intended Pheasants to lay say a dozen eggs and hatch three or four.

I think infertility may be caused in part by the intensive rearing systems now so generally adopted. Some species especially amongst the earlier introductions have proved pretty permanent in captivity. Of the commoner species such as Golden, Amherst, Silver, and Reeves, the larger proportion of the young bred have been reared by people who only rear a few broods of Pheasants and have the chicks running loose in their gardens. Brown Crossoptilan are, I believe, all descended from three birds imported into France in the 1860s. From these three birds and their children of the first season somewhere about 200 young were reared in the second breeding season. I wonder if Monsieur Delacour can give any details from the available records of whether these young were reared in the fields as the game Pheasants were in Europe before the late war? In striking contrast is the history of another Crossoptilan, the White. Some birds were bred from the original wild stock, but now I believe pure breeding stocks are practically non-existent. Why the difference? The best brood of Blue Crossoptilans that I ever saw for size, vigour, and evenness of growth were a brood of about eight reared by Mr. Whitley at Paignton and these and their hen foster mother were all running loose in a big garden with lots of shrubberies and stretches of grass. Mr. Whitley also had a wonderful brood of some Kaleege which were being similarly reared.

Of the species largely introduced or reintroduced into Europe during the inter-war period, Mikado, Copper Pheasants, Versicolor, Imperial, Edwards, Lewis's, etc., have either vanished or become extremely rare. The Imperials at Leckford before the war were never bred though both pairs looked healthy. Of Lewis's we possessed only a male. Edwards is still breeding fairly well, Mikados suffer badly

from infertility. The Copper Pheasants have temperament difficulties so we will omit them from this examination. In America, I believe, the breeding stocks of pure Imperial have ceased to exist. Imperial, Edwards, Lewis's (which is a dark Silver Pheasant), Mikado, and Versicolor all belong to families which should have been easy to establish as say the typical Silver and the Golden and probably easier than Crossoptilans. The above species were almost all very expensive and were kept by people who took great care of the youngsters and reared them in moveable coops. To-day pure stocks of nearly all have ceased to exist or are very rare because the breeding stock is not prolific. The war has, of course, speeded matters, but they had started to fade away before the war. The White Crossoptilan was not so badly hit by the war.

I was talking to Mr. Milligan who is in charge of our Pheasants and who has had great experience in Pheasant rearing and who has an unlimited amount of patience with small chicks. We were talking of the breeding season which in the case of the water fowl has been the best we have ever had. He said he used to have better fertility and reared many more Pheasants, but I pointed out that the breeding stock then used were either wild-caught imported birds which continued to breed satisfactorily year after year or the first generation bred from them. If someone possessed a good pair, say of Imperials, which for six or eight years bred good broods people got the impression that Imperials were becoming well established in captivity as there were quite a lot about, but that impression was a false one unless their children and children's children were still prolific.

The natural fertility of a Pheasant and a duck is similar ; they both hatch large families for the same reasons and performances should be comparable. From three Bahama Pintail Ducks, and one of them an old prewar bird who laid one clutch and her two two-year-old daughters, 65 Bahama Pintail have been reared this year. Ducks are easier to rear and are sooner past the difficult stage. I'm not comparing final results but the numbers hatched per pair. Waterfowl here have always led a far more natural life than the Pheasants, and the ducklings live loose on streams after they are a few days old. We undoubtedly lose a few from vermin, or because they stray, but the survivors are virile. The amount of exercise taken by a free duckling or by the wild Pheasant chick in its daily search for insect or live food is quite fantastic. Two hen wild Pheasants reared broods in the watermeadows and I watched them daily. Two things surprised me, firstly that the hen Pheasant reared them in a limited territory of about an acre till they were quite large. I had never had a wild Pheasant under constant observation and had presumed she just wandered about wherever her fancy took her. Secondly I was surprised how when passing over the territory say on my way to and from breakfast I so

often met the hen and her tiny chicks first at one end and then on my return at the other of her territory.

Last year we had Peafowl chicks reared by a hen first in a coop and then in a large aviary and the second clutches reared by the Peahens wandering loose. The latter grew much more quickly than the former. This year we have the domestic hen loose and her chicks are maintaining their lead.

Next spring we are going to try an experiment. I am going to rear a few Pheasants running loose in the garden. I shall pinion them and when they are grown up turn them out in a large orchard of five or six acres. We shall catch up the birds at the end of the winter and put them in aviaries and see whether the fertility of their eggs has improved. So much for the rearing side of the management.

Now for feeding. I think probably Pheasants in aviaries either eat too much food or get it too easily. To harp back to the waterfowl and to the wild Pheasants. Between meals the waterfowl expend a great deal of energy swimming about and searching for natural food. On wet days and every evening they wander about the grassy parts of the pen searching for worms and slugs and in one way or another lead a pretty active life. The wild Pheasants in late summer and autumn live fatly and easily on grain, acorns, and beech mast. In winter they work much harder covering a lot of ground or get a lot of exercise digging in the drifts of leaves looking for the remaining fruits. By spring they live on green food and animal food, both of high protein content. I wonder if it would help if one made Pheasants scratch in litter like fowls for their living and in spring fed them a great variety of green foods and a small amount of mash rich in protein rather than on the more easily given grain and mash.

That Pheasants can be bred one generation after another when intensively kept and reared I am fully aware, but under such conditions they must receive very different treatment from the general run. Mme Malisoux, for example, continues to rear Satyr and Blyth's Tragopans in fair numbers from very limited breeding stocks. And her stocks have been captive bred for a number of generations.

This article is not intended to be dogmatic. I do not know the reasons for the extinction of such species as Imperial or Lewis's Pheasants in captivity. I only wish someone would tell me. But that there is something lacking in the way Pheasants are kept in captivity is obvious from the long lists of disappearances of various species which cannot be put down solely to the difficulties of war-time conditions. They had in 1939 already started to fade away. Lack of new blood cannot be the sole reason when such well established species as the Brown Crossoptilan and Swinhoe have all descended from a very few indivduals. Different species also must vary enormously in their ability to adapt themselves to captivity, but when one species thrives and

another near relation fails as in the case of the Brown and White Crossoptilan one must, I think, compare the management of the foundation breeding stocks.

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# THE KALIJS, SILVER PHEASANTS, FIREBACKS AND THEIR ALLIES

(Genus *Lophura*)

By J. DELACOUR

(Abstracted and adapted from *The Ibis*, 1949, pp. 188–200.)

The ten species of Pheasants which I include in the Genus *Lophura* have been distributed among a variable number of genera by different authors in the course of the last hundred years or so. Previously the known forms had been generally united under the antedated generic names *Euplocomus*. These species have in common a number of general, deep-seated characteristics both morphological and biological, but because of well-marked secondary peculiarities almost everyone of them was later on set up as a monotypic genus. Such splitting, however, was then perfectly understandable in accordance with the fashion of the day. But modern tendencies for the simplification of nomenclature, as well as new facts such as the discovery of the Imperial Pheasant and a better knowledge of the morphology and behaviour of several other species, have altered my viewpoint. We have now learned by the study of more adequate series and by new observations of live specimens, that the species *inornata*, *edwardsi*, and *imperialis* provide links between other forms. I am convinced that all ten species are related to a sufficient degree to be considered as forming a single natural genus.

It must be remembered that the large and brightly coloured game birds commonly called " Pheasants " clearly belong to a small number (16) of very distinct, well-defined group of species, none of which is very closely connected with the others. It is therefore inconsistent to divide any of such a natural group of obviously near related species into several genera, as it creates a false notion of real affinities. May I repeat once again that the genus expresses relationship and the species differences.

The Pheasants of the genus *Lophura* contain some fairly generalized and rather primitive forms, and also very highly specialized ones. They are heavy, fowl-like birds with compressed, roof-shaped tails like the Junglefowls, Eared Pheasants, and Crested Argus, and large erectile wattles covering the face around the eye resembling those of Eared Pheasants, Cheer, Long-tailed, and Common Pheasants. The legs are longer than the middle toe, strong and armed with a long, sharp, white spur in the male, exceptionally also found in the female.

The bill is moderate in size. The wings are rounded, the first primary short, the second equal to the ninth or tenth, the fifth and sixth the longest. There are no complicated ornaments such as ruffs, long, disintegrated hackles, ocelli, etc., but the feathers of the back and rump are broad, truncated, and fringed with metallic colours in most species, many of which are crested. Eared Pheasants (*Crossoptilon*) are probably the nearest genus.

The sexes are conspicuously different. The males show various tones of grey, chestnut, fulvous and blue, black and white, with the addition of coppery red, crimson, yellow and maroon in some species. Females are brown of different shades, with or without markings, and have indications of spurs only, the one exception being the black, cock-like hen of *L. erythrophthalma* ; the face wattles are smaller. Three species are fully crested in both sexes ; in four the cock alone possesses a conspicuous tuft, while three others are entirely crestless ; crests vary greatly in structure, shape, and size. Face wattles are blue in two species, scarlet in all others ; they are usually covered with small papillæ, and have a velvety aspect ; when fully extended they show several lobes, differing according to species, which in one case become extremely long. The compressed tail consists normally of sixteen feathers, occasionally reduced to fourteen in two species (*inornata*, *erythrophthalma*), while the most elaborate member of the genus (*bulweri*) has up to thirty-two ; the tail moult processes from outside inward. In two crestless species (*erythrophthalma*, *inornata*) the tail is hen-like, short, not pointed, straight, the central pair of feathers shorter than the third in *erythrophthalma*, as they are also in *ignita* and *diardi*, which have pointed and curved rectrices. In *edwardsi*, the tail is rounded and straight. In four others (*leucomelana*, *nycthemera*, *imperialis*, *swinhoei*) the central pointed pair is the longest, but the tail varies much in size and shape. In *bulweri* the rectrices are tremendously developed and multiplied.

All the downy chicks have the same general pattern : crown and upper parts brown of various shades, with a dark patch or line on the crown, two darker lines from eye to nape, and two whitish bands on the sides of the back ; under parts pale buff or whitish, the breast and sides tinged with brown.

Gallopheasants live at low or moderate altitudes up to 11,000 feet, in forest and jungle, on the foothills and lower ranges of the Himalayas, from the Indus River, to Bhutan, Assam, Burma, Southern China, Formosa, Hainan, Indo-China, Siam, Malaya, Sumatra, and Borneo. Their centre of dispersion is probably Central Annam, where four species are found within a small area (*nycthemera*, *imperialis*, *edwardsi*, and *diardi*). Three species occur in Siam, in Sumatra, and in Borneo, but at different altitudes and in different parts, and only two may be found together at any place. There are two species in Malaya,

Tenasserim, and the rest of Indo-China. Elsewhere one species only lives in any one district. There are none in Ceylon and Java.

The more specialized birds show little or no geographical variation, but the others are split into a variable, sometimes high number of subspecies. All species are very distinct, with the exception of two, *leucomelana* and *nycthemera*, which replace one another geographically. Such important and stable characteristics, however, as the colour of the legs, the shape of the crest, still more so the fact that birds of the western *leucomelana* group mature the first year, while those of the eastern *nycthemera* group become adult the second year only, and the presence of unstable hybrid populations where both meet east of the Irrawaddy in Burma, have induced me to consider them as two separate species constituting a superspecies.

All Gallopheasants have similar life habits. They are found in forests, bamboos, and thick bush where they are often difficult to see, but many of them are not particularly wary nor wild. They go in pairs and small flocks, often noisy, and some species can be found at times on roads and clearings close to the edges of the jungle. Opinions differ as to whether they are monogamous or polygamous, and do really pair in the wild state. They are usually monogamous in confinement but, loose in a park, Silver Pheasants are polygamous, and I have often met in Indo-China with parties of that species, and also of the Siamese Firebacks, composed of one or several cocks and three to five hens, even in the early spring, which may have been still unbroken family groups. Gallopheasants live and nest on the ground, roosting on trees at night, or when frightened. They are omnivorous. The cocks are very quarrelsome, and when tame they will often attack even human beings.

Hen Gallopheasants lay, as a rule, a fairly large clutch of eggs, four to fourteen, in sheltered spots, without making much of a nest. Incubation lasts from twenty-one to twenty-five days, twenty-four in most cases. The eggs are spotless except for tiny white pit marks, rather short and pointed at one end, varying from creamy white to deep rosy buff.

The voice differs in tone according to species, but all have a variety of notes, and the male emits a long-drawn shrill whistle followed by loud and deep, ventriloquial boomings ; the hens utter a repeated, deep " whooff ". The cocks have the habit of beating their wings at a fast, vibrating speed, producing a whirring noise ; otherwise, with the exception of the elaborate display of *bulweri*, and to a lesser degree of *swinhoei*, they have a fairly simple courtship, mostly lateral, puffing out the lower back and rump, spreading vertically the tail feathers, raising their crest or crown feathers, and expanding the face wattles. They walk around the hens, clucking and booming, and shaking the tail. In *L. swinhoei*, the courtship is more elaborate ; the

cock bobs his head up and down and jumps about jerkily ; its face wattles extended as in all the others, but consisting of four lobes instead of the usual two ; the upper one is long, upstraight, showing well above the crown. The wonderful display of *bulweri* has been watched, described, and figured by O. Heinroth at the Berlin Zoo (*Journ. für Orn.*, 86, 1938, the *Avicultural Magazine*, 1938, pp. 177–180, and *L'Oiseau*, 1938, pp. 365–7). The bird expands his long face wattles in a sort of a stiff, arched ribbon, 8 inches long, hiding completely the beak ; the huge white tail is spread into a vertical, flat disk which reaches the nape in front and rattles on the soil behind. He struts slowly about and stands still with a jerk when the hen comes close up to him. Elaborate as the pose is, anyone acquainted with the ordinary display of the average Gallopheasant can recognize the basic similarity of the performance.

The greatest caution must be used when interpreting the courtship displays of Pheasants. Particularly, no undue importance attaches to the fact that it is frontal or lateral. This depends entirely upon the shape of the tail and varies in closely linked species. When the rectrices are set horizontally and the tail is flat, the frontal display is the rule, as in Peacocks (*Pavo*), Great Argus (*Argusianus*), most of the Peacock Pheasants (*Polyplectron*) and Monauls (*Lophophorus*), which all spread their tail. Even Elliot's and Mikado Pheasants (*Syrmaticus*) have been exceptionally observed to do it. But species with a more or less roof-shaped tail cannot spread it frontally ; they have to content themselves with a lateral courtship, which, of course, also exists in the others as a preliminary stage. It had no deep significance as to natural relationship. Rheinhart's Argus (*Rheinartia*) and the Bronze-tailed Peacock Pheasant (*P. chalcurum*), for instance, close relatives of the Great Argus and of the other Polyplectrons, have a lateral display because their tail is narrow and compressed. Yet in every other way they all resemble one another. No one has so far observed the display of *Polyplectron inopinatum*, which, morphologically speaking, holds an exactly intermediate position between *P. chalcurum* and the other more specialized species of the genus. It would be interesting to ascertain the mode of its courtship.

In ordinary circumstances, Bulwer's Pheasants resemble Siamese Firebacks in shape and action ; they also have thin, high legs, and their rectrices are curved outwards ; but contrary to *diardi*, they always remain wary and wild, and they are usually silent. They have smooth blue wattles like *ignita*. As Hachisuka has pointed out (*Zoologica*, 26, 1941), besides some relationship with *diardi* and *ignita*, *bulweri* has strong affinities with the Blue Pheasants (*edwardsi*, *imperialis*, *swinhoei*). The enormous white tail of the cock is modestly suggested by the large white central rectrices of *swinhoei*, whose face wattles begin to show long lobes, announcing the tremendous ones of *bulweri*.

The metallic, fringed feathers of the back and rump are similar to those of the males of all Blue Pheasants and Firebacks, only a little more modified. The female *bulweri* recalls very closely in colour and pattern those of *edwardsi* and *imperialis*, differing mostly in the higher legs, the blue face wattles and in the greater number of tail feathers. She has no crest, as in *swinhoei*, *edwardsi*, *imperialis*, *diardi*, *erythrophthalma*, and *inornata*, and the male is also devoid of it as in the last two species. It must be noted that the difference in the number of tail feathers is not generally regarded as a generic characteristic in *Gallus* or in *Crossoptilon*. *L. bulweri* is, in fact, intermediate in a general way between the Firebacks and the Blue Pheasants. I do not consider that the extreme development of the lobes of the wattles, nor that of the number of tail feathers, both ornamental features, are very ancient characters, and I prefer to place *bulweri* in the genus *Lophura*, of which it constitutes the most highly specialized form.

Formerly there seemed to be quite a gap between the Firebacks *erythrophthalma*, *ignita*, *diardi*), the Blue Pheasants (*swinhoei*, *edwardsi*), and the Kalijs and Silver Pheasants (*leucomelana*, *nycthemera*), mostly due to differences in the crest, the shape of the tail, the colour pattern the shiny fringes and metallic hues of the first two groups varying a great deal from the more sombre hues of the last-named birds. But the discovery of *inornata* in Sumatra and of *imperialis* in Annam has changed the whole picture. On the one hand, *inornata*, a mountain species, is obviously related to the lowland *erythrophthalma* which it represents at higher altitudes, having also a short, straight tail, grey legs, and lacking a crest in both sexes. On the other hand, it is also related to *edwardsi* and *imperialis* in the dark, blue fringed plumage of the male and the chestnut dress of the female. The rather short, straight tail of *edwardsi* is another indication of relationship with *inornata*. But it remains that *edwardsi* is very close to *imperialis* and to *swinhoei*. Either they all have to be considered congeneric, or to be placed into three different genera, as it has eventually been proposed by some authors. At the same time, *imperialis* no doubt provides a link between the Blue Pheasants and the Kalijs (*leucomelana*) which it resembles much, differing only in the presence of blue fringes to the feathers, the red legs and the lack of a true crest of the female, which, however, possesses elongated feathers on the crown that are visible when they are erected. *L. imperialis* produces completely fertile hybrids with *leucomelana*, *nycthemera*, *edwardsi*, and *swinhoei*. It seems therefore impossible to split generically these species.

*L. erythrophthalma*, *L. ignata*, and *L. diardi* are showing undoubted relationship in the peculiar metallic coppery-maroon coloration of the lower back and rump of the males, while the females differ much in colour, general proportions, shape of the tail, and the presence or absence of a crest. *Inornata* certainly links them to *edwardsi* and

*imperialis*. They also resemble completely the other Gallopheasants in voice, behaviour, and life habits. It is therefore appropriate to place them all in the same genus, for which the name *Lophura*, the oldest, must be used.

Experiments on the production of hybrids in captivity have been conducted for many years ; particularly Professor A. Ghigi has published very interesing studies on the subject.

Gamebirds belonging to widely separated genera will produce hybrids when their mating habits are not too different, but such hybrids are completely infertile. Others produce partly fertile hybrids, the males of which breed successfully with females of either parent species, but the females are either completely sterile and masculine in appearance, or lay only imperfect eggs which cannot develop. On the contrary, birds belonging to very closely allied species and to subspecies of the same species produce completely fertile hybrids. There are of course intermediate cases between these divisions.

As far as *Lophura* is concerned, hybrids between the species of Kalijs and Silver Pheasants (*leucomelana*, *nycthemera*) and of Blue Pheasants (*imperialis*, *edwardsi*, *swinhoei*) are completely fertile ; those between Kalijs, Silver, and Blue Pheasants on the one hand, and the Firebacks (*ignita*, *erythrophthalma*, *diardi*) on the other, are partly fertile, the male only being capable of breeding. No hybrids between the different Firebacks, or between any other species and *inornata* or *bulweri*, have yet been obtained. Hybrids between *Lophura nycthemera* and *Crossoptilon*, *Chrysolophus pictus*, *Syrmaticus reevesi*, and *Phasianus colchicus* are partly fertile, that is to say the males are, while the females are sterile. Hybrids between *Lophura* and any other genus other than those named above are sterile as far as we know.

The various degrees of fecundity in hybrids are certainly a good indication of relationship between the parent species. But I do not think that they can always be used as a final criterion for generic division. I believe that they undoubtedly indicate definite affinities, but they constitute only one of many characteristics, morphological and biological, which have to be taken into consideration for a natural systematic arrangement of the genera and species.

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Cock Satyr Tragopan × Swinhoe Pheasant [*Antwerp Zoo*

*Copyright*

*To face p. 219*

# THE REARING OF A SATYR TRAGOPAN × SWINHOE PHEASANT CROSS

By S. LAGA

(Translated and reprinted from *Ornithologie*, bulletin of the Cercle Ornithologique de Belgique)

In 1943 I obtained, quite by accident, a somewhat extraordinary cross; a male Satyr Tragopan (*T. satyra*) and a female Swinhoe Pheasant (*Lophura swinhoe*) mated, and I possess the result, two males and one female.

This is how it came about. I placed the two birds in a small aviary 16 square metres in size, also occupied by Budgerigars. The male Tragopan was three years old, the offspring of an imported pair of these birds. The female Swinhoe was six years old and of unknown origin. Put together in January, these birds mated during February, and at the beginning of March the female began to lay. She laid five eggs only. The eggs were placed under a Peking bantam, and after twenty-seven days four chicks were hatched, one of which unfortunately died on emerging from the egg. The fifth egg was clear. The three young hatched in the middle of April, and developed quite normally so far as their feeding and growth was concerned. These chicks were very vigorous and hardy; at eight days they were already able to perch to the great distress of their Peking mother. From their birth to the ages of eight months they lived in a small aviary of 2 metres by 2 metres containing a privet bush, in the branches of which they passed the night.

The food of the parents in this time of restrictions was not rich, they received every day a handful of seeds and an abundance of green food. As for the youngsters, up to the age of two months I gave them three times a day a mash composed of stale bread finely crumbled, scrambled egg, white cheese, some ants' eggs all mixed together with lettuce and finely chopped carrots.

The cross was not intended or desired. It was only owing to lack of space that the birds were put in the same aviary.

The hybrids so produced are objects of astonishment for the Pheasant fancier. The two cocks resemble their Tragopan father; they are high on their legs, and have the head of a Tragopan. The young female on the other hand resembles the Swinhoe of which she has the general characteristics. I have the impression that the coloration of their plumage is not completely developed at the age of one year, and I am anxious to see what they look like next year.

The above article was written in 1944, and the birds were then

transferred to the Antwerp Zoo. Mr. Walter Van den bergh, Director of the Antwerp Zoo, writing in 1949, says :—

" We received the three hybrids, two cocks and hen, but the hen died in 1944. The hen showed the characteristics of a female Tragopan, being a uniform brown colour, and the upper mandible of the beak forming a regular curve with the skull.

One of the males was sent to Dr. Valle, Blérick lez-Venloo, in Holland, but the other male is still in the Antwerp Zoo, and doing well. The following is a description of it :—

*Head.*—Beak dark horn colour ; bare skin round the eye, of which the iris is brown. Cheeks red mixed with purple. Crest black at the base of the beak ; the feathers, which are lancet-shaped, are orange in colour, with black tips ; with every 3 to 4 mm. a spot along the edges. The back of the neck is black speckled with chestnut red shading into dark chestnut red on the back. The feathers have chestnut tips and have a light metallic reflection.

*Wings.*—Lesser wing-coverts dark, the middle being chestnut ; median wing-coverts the same, but the patch in the middle smaller ; metallic reflections. Flight feathers dark brown, spotted with chestnut, with dark tips.

*Belly.*—Velvety black with here and there, irregularly, the tips of the feathers chestnut red.

*Tail.*—Like the flight feathers.

*Rump.*—Black with metallic reflections.

*Feet.*—Flesh coloured."

(Mr. Van den berg has kindly sent a collection of feathers from this bird, which I shall be pleased to send to any member wishing to look at them.—Ed.)

* * *

# SOME NOTES ON COMMON AND GOLDEN PHEASANTS

By Derek Goodwin

Despite my protests that, as one who has only kept two species of Pheasants, the Common (*P. colchicus*) and the Golden (*C. pictus*) in my back garden, for my writings on the subject to appear among the works of those whose vast aviaries are filled with the rarest galliformes from the snow-capped Himalayas and the steaming Malayan jungles would be as inappropriate as the fabled daw among the Peacocks, I have been requested to write for our Pheasant number. Kind reader, bear this in mind and if grieved at the waste of paper, direct your wrath solely at the head of our fair Editor !

Most of us have heard of the ancient Greek philosopher, who, when asked by the vainglorious Eastern potentate if he was not amazed at the latter's magnificence replied to the effect that having already seen the Pheasant he could no longer be amazed at mere human finery. Times have changed, and in a more materialistic age most people see in the Pheasant not a divine epitome of beauty but merely so much edible flesh, or more often an instrument to satisfy the love of killing for killing's sake which, strong in so many mammals, finds its most intense expression in the arch-mammal, man. Still, whether appreciated or not, the Common Pheasant, in all its many races and even in the mongrel product of their injudicious interbreeding in the interests of sport, stands now, as ever, as one of the world's most beautiful birds.

I obtained my first Common Pheasant when in my very early teens. A fellow criminal and myself had wandered into a game preserve in search of grass snakes, and were watching the Pheasants scattering at our approach, when suddenly I saw one run into a small bush growing against the wire fence round the field. Could I catch it against the wire ? Would it be foolish enough to try to go straight through instead of breaking out to either side ? It was ! I could ! But when I held the gorgeous bird in my hands I could hardly credit my good fortune, and my friend was hardly less excited. No pangs of conscience worried us but we realized that a hasty withdrawal from the scene was expedient, and returned home triumphant. To go to catch snakes and bring home a live cock Pheasant ! Did ever the gods so smile on mere mortals before ? The Pheasant was placed in a large garage that had been converted into an aviary and housed several small birds. He was evidently a " reared " bird as he soon settled down and became fairly tame. Unfortunately, his life was short as after I had had him a week I slipped when near him in the aviary and, throwing out my arms, startled the Pheasant who at once rocketed up and struck the roof with such force that he fell dead. Needless to say, more visits were paid to the game preserve, but without avail. Never

again did a Pheasant run into the same bush, and elsewhere the bushes were all on the wrong (woodland) side of the wire. On the last visit we came upon scores of Pheasants in a low-lying field and adjacent wood, but not one could we catch. After half an hour of vain pursuit and empty stratagems we began to have misgivings. Not without reason, as the constant whirring and cok-cok-cokking of startled Pheasants, intermingled with the alarm notes of Jays and Blackbirds, was enough to awake the dead. A quarter of a mile away from the safety of a copse on some rising ground we looked back. From all points of the compass a posse of determined-looking men were converging upon the scene of our late endeavours. In the joy of our timely escape we forgot to grieve at our failure but decided that the place was now too dangerous for any further attempts.

Some years later I reared a brood of Common Pheasants under a bantam hen. In those days I had more time than I have now, and devoted much of it to tempting the finicky appetites of the lovely delicate little birds with chopped egg custard, young lettuce, small green caterpillars, and other dainties. Fortune favoured me in that none died, but as they were running loose in the garden, some vanished, doubtless borne off by some furred or feathered predator. Five hens and two cocks were reared, the latter differing greatly in appearance, one being a very dark, lustrous coppery purple bird but with a broad white collar and the other a rather lack-lustre 'torquatus'-like specimen but with only a narrow neck-ring. They ran free in the garden with their wings clipped, and were delightfully tame and friendly, with none of the nervousness that these birds often show. Alas, a fox got five of them one night as they roosted in a high privet hedge. Of the two hens left, one—which had been left full-winged—disappeared the following April. The other commenced laying on the 9th April and continued until well into June, a total of forty-nine eggs. She made no attempt to sit, her method being to scrape out a nest, lay a dozen or so eggs in it, and then start again. The eggs were all sterile, since although she often solicited a cock Golden Pheasant kept with her, he did not reciprocate.

This brings me to the Golden Pheasant, a bird not more beautiful than the Common Pheasant but more strikingly coloured and although so brilliantly clad yet without any clashing of the bright colours in which the male is arrayed. As with the Common and Reeves' Pheasants, the female's intricate cryptic markings are as beautiful as, and a perfect foil for, the male's brilliance. This bird has become semi-domesticated with all the powers of resistance to stale ground, poor feeding, and close confinement usually attendant on this state. Nor has it *yet* had its natural beauty ruined by being bred by fanciers into all sorts of unnatural and unpleasing varieties as have most domestic birds. Young Golden Pheasants are supremely easy to rear. Although they

look at first even more delicate than Common Pheasant chicks they are (in my limited experience) far hardier and less fastidious. I feed mine at first on egg custard and green fly, but after a few days get them to bread and milk and wood-ant cocoons, adding chopped peanuts and a little grain from about the third week. They are kept in a pen on the lawn and moved daily. No doubt at all that complete liberty would be better for them, but it would be no kindness, as if they are free when young they seldom take kindly to aviary life later. Also, as in addition to the natural hazards in the way of Sparrow-hawks, Owls, and Crows, one also has to contend with the far more numerous and destructive dog and cat, it is much safer to confine them. I might add that I have known Goldens (some thirty of them) reared without mishap that were confined to small pens seldom moved—never till the floor was a quagmire of mud and excreta—and fed on hard corn and maggots tipped straight from a bucket of rotten fish without any preliminary scouring. I do not advise such a system, but it shows how tough the birds are. As liberty birds I think Goldens would be a great success in a large garden surrounded by its own estate, but in a smaller place they sooner or later fly off at some alarm ; when they try to walk back they find several wire fences in the way and are soon hopelessly lost. If they reach woodland they may survive for some time, but in a region of gardens and wire fences they are soon slain by man or dog. Goldens are usually perfectly inoffensive towards other birds, but it must be admitted that like other Pheasants they foul the ground more than a little and destroy every vestige of grass (except in a very large aviary). Also, if one rears many young ones one is liable to find them rather a responsibility, as it is difficult to find good homes for them as a rule, whilst if one aspires to recoup his fortunes by selling them he will find that buying and selling are two vastly different things.

The common practice of rearing Golden Pheasants and others under domestic fowls although justifiable in the case of rare species where the number of young reared is the main consideration is otherwise to be strongly condemned. The rearing of the young is, or should be, one of the most interesting stages of the birds' life cycle and no one genuinely interested in the study of birds ought, unless compelled, to short-circuit it in the interests of gain or convenience. There are also other considerations : most birds tend to become to a greater or lesser degree sexually fixated on the species that rears them, and I think much of the disappointments caused through cock Pheasants refusing to mate with, or even killing hens of their own species, could be traced back to their having been reared by bantam foster-mothers. Certainly much remains to be learnt of the breeding behaviour of even a common species like the Golden. In the *Ibis* for April, 1949, I recorded how in 1948 my hen Golden Pheasants sat

for some twenty-four days without leaving the nest or taking food or water. This was repeated in 1949 and I feel sure represents the normal behaviour of the species in a wild state. I would appeal to all Pheasant keepers to let their birds lay, retain their eggs as laid and sit in a natural manner without any attempt to entice them from the nest. Under these circumstances I think it probable that other species would be found to incubate continuously, since it is most unlikely that the habit is confined to four birds so distinct as the Eider Duck, the Argus, the Golden Pheasant, and the Emu, which appear to be the only ones in which it has been recorded. Unlike my hen Common Pheasant, none of my Goldens has ever attempted to make a nest prior to becoming broody. True, after she has laid the hen picks up leaves or straws and throws them backwards over her shoulder (an odd habit shared apparently by galliformes and charadriiformes) but nothing in the nature of a nest results. Nor is any attempt made to protect the eggs. I have seen a Jay stand by a laying Pheasant and break open her egg the moment it was laid without her showing the least sign of resentment or distress. Once she goes broody, however, all is changed. The eggs are gathered carefully together, a hollow shaped out and lined with any debris within reach and a few downy feathers, and woe betide any intruder.

Few things are more appealing than a hen Golden with her chicks. For the first few days she does little but brood them, but after that she is most assiduous in calling them to any titbit she finds. This she usually holds with lowered head until a chick takes it from her bill, although rarely she may drop it on the ground like a domestic fowl. She continues to act in this manner for some four months or more until the chicks are quite as large as she is. What is more strange is that sometimes hens that have not reared chicks or even incubated eggs will in late spring commence to use the food call exactly as if they had chicks to feed. I have been struck both by how quickly other Golden Pheasants and Jays in the same aviary learn to profit by this behaviour, and the fact that it is quite obvious that the hen so calling does not do so with the intention of feeding such aviary companions. Even a cock Golden Pheasant will sometimes call in this way, just as the sight of an egg may induce in him the feminine actions of " feeling " it with his bill and throwing leaves, etc., over his shoulder like a female does after laying. The warning notes of the Golden when she sees some predatory animal, or more often when she imagines that she has seen one—the low startled " Tlook ! Tlook ! " followed by the high-pitched squealing " eeee ! " must be well known, and owing to its power of alarming other birds well hated, by all who have kept the species, but used by a hen at liberty with chicks it has an even more potent effect. As the squeal is emitted so the chicks scatter, some diving into near-by herbage, others flying some distance

before dropping to earth. Not until she is quite satisfied that danger is past, will their mother call them up again. Nor, until she does, will the chicks shake off their terror. If, as sometimes happens, they have flown into a neighbour's garden and one attempts to catch them, although a few minutes previously they were tame and unafraid they are now panic stricken and if aware that they have been spotted, dash or fly madly away at one's approach. Similar behaviour can be noted in active chicks of other species. It is as though the impulse to escape, once set in motion by the alarm notes of the parent, cannot be "switched off" except by her note of reassurance. As with the Jay and domestic fowl (and I suspect most other birds) the "Hawk-alarm" is entirely different from the normal one, being in this case a very low moaning note, barely audible at a few yards. With adults the bird seeing a Hawk keeps quite still as it gives the alarm, whereas for any other predator, real or imaginary, it makes no effort to conceal itself but flies up on to a perch, or if the object is at a distance or not clearly visible will make a cautious but noisy approach. The reason is obvious since no mammalian predator (excluding man) has much chance of capturing a Pheasant once the latter has seen it and it matters little how conspicuous the bird makes itself. With a bird-of-prey the case is of course very different if the Pheasant is in the open, and in this case it is biologically undesirable that the Hawk should see or hear it. Pheasants, like Doves, often seem to find the sight of crippled or sick birds of their own species displeasing and usually vent their distaste on the luckless bird that arouses it. I have seen one of my hen Goldens deliberately kill a sickly young bird that kept falling over. The hen Goldens' defensive reactions are aroused by the cries of a chick caught by some predator ; care must be taken when picking up a chick as apart from the unpleasantness of having an angry Pheasant fly into one's face, which of course will only happen if one holds the chick near it, she is as likely in her agitation to peck the chick as to peck the hand that holds it. The automatic nature of this reaction was well illustrated when I caught up a cock Golden Pheasant in an aviary in which a ten-year-old hen was sitting on chipping eggs. At his first squeal of fear she hurtled across the floor of the aviary and attacked me furiously. The automatic defending reactions having evidently pre-dated the actual emergence of her young.

Apart from detailed study of its habits I think aviculturists, particularly those blessed with money, space, or time in abundance, should set themselves two targets with regard to the Golden Pheasant. (1) To breed for a "homing" propensity at least equal to that of the domestic fowl, and (2) to set themselves resolutely against the temptation to breed for size or abnormalities either of form or plumage and let the little brilliant wild Golden be their physical model of perfection.

## OFFICERS FOR 1950

A Council Meeting was held on 9th November, 1949, in the Council Room of the Zoological Society of London.

There were the following appointments and retirements :—

Vice-President.—Mr. D. Seth-Smith.

Council.—Mrs. N. Wharton-Tigar, Mr. D. Seth-Smith and Prebendary J. E. Sweetman retired by seniority ; Mr. E. J. Boosey, Mr. Gerald Iles and Mr. R. C. Witting were elected to fill the vacancies.

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## THE SOCIETY'S MEDAL

The Council proposes to award the Society's Medal to :—

Mr. E. N. T. Vane, for breeding the Noble Macaw, *Ara nobilis cumanensis.*

Any member or reader knowing of a previous breeding of this species in the United Kingdom or Northern Ireland is requested to communicate at once with the Hon. Secretary.

* * *

## BRITISH AVICULTURISTS' CLUB

The nineteenth meeting of the Club was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, South Kensington, S.W. 7, on Wednesday, 9th November, 1949, at 6 p.m., followed by a dinner.

Chairman : Mr. D. Seth-Smith.

Members of the Club : Major J. E. Adlard, Miss P. Barclay-Smith (Vice-Chairman), Miss K. Bonner, Capt. A. Clarence, T. Crewes, B. H. Dulanty, O. E. Dunmore, A. Ezra (Patron), J. F. M. Floyd, T. Goodwin, F. Grant, C. F. Harding, H. J. Harman, G. T. Iles, H. J. Indge, Terry Jones, Miss E. M. Knobel (Club Hostess), Miss M. H. Knobel-Harman, G. C. Lynch, G. S. Mottershead, H. Murray, S. Murray, K. A. Norris, Mrs. L. N. Phipps, Sydney Porter, A. A. Prestwich (Hon Secretary), D. H. S. Risdon, R. C. J. Sawyer, E. N. T. Vane, Mrs. M. K. Woodford, R. C. Witting, Wallace Wood.

Guest of the Club : H.G. the Duke of Bedford.

Guests : Miss Yvonne Arnaud, Jim Bailey, J. N. C. Bennett, Mrs. D. Carson-Roberts, Burnard Chadwick, Miss Imogen Dix, W. J. C. Frost, Miss S. Goodwin, Mrs. F. Grant, S. T. Hare, J. W. Lester, Mrs. J. W. Lester, Mrs. S. Murray, J. A. Norris, Mrs. D. Seth-Smith, Lady Spencer-Jones, Miss Oriel Vaughan, H. Wilmot, Mrs. H. Wilmot, Mrs. R. C. Witting.

Members of the Club, 33 ; guests, 21 ; total, 54.

The Chairman, opening the meeting, said he had great pleasure in

welcoming several important guests : H.G. the Duke of Bedford, the most experienced breeder of Parrot-like birds in the country ; Lady Spencer-Jones, wife of the Astronomer Royal, and Miss Yvonne Arnaud, animal lover, pianist, and actress.

Mr. G. T. Iles showed a colour film, Wild Life in Captivity, taken at the Belle Vue Zoo, Manchester. Mainly devoted to animals it was of such interest that it could not fail to appeal to all. The whole of the Zoo was covered and there were specially interesting pictures of a baby Tiger, Hippopotami, Miss Arnaud with a couple of Elephants, and of the unique Gerenuk or Giraffe-necked Gazelle. The birds shown included Flamingoes, Bateleur Eagle, Nubian Vulture, a White Peacock, bred at Leckford, displaying ; and a 7 weeks old Ostrich, which had already developed a passion for cigarette ends and tram tickets ! Mr. Iles remarked that a Laughing Kingfisher had lived in the Gardens since 1921, and that it, and a companion, had a fondness for grapes. A second film was devoted to Continental Zoos, and conveyed a good idea of the Vincennes Zoological Park and the Gardens of Zurich and Basle.

The appreciation of the audience was shown by the sustained applause at the end of the films.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Iles for giving what had proved such a very interesting description of the various Zoos and congratulated him on the excellence of his photography.

The date of the next meeting is **11th January 1950.**

ARTHUR A. PRESTWICH,
*Hon. Secretary and Treasurer.*

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## PERSONALIA

Since first published in 1929, our American contemporary *Aviculture* has suffered many vicissitudes. Jean Delacour has recently been elected President of the Avicultural Society of America, and we confidently look forward to an ever-increasing improvement in the fortunes of this Magazine.

In 1908 David Seth-Smith made and brought to England an important collection of Australian fauna—so important, in fact, that the Zoological Society awarded him its Silver Medal. A link with that collection has just been broken by the death of a Banksian Cockatoo, after 41 years' residence in the Parrot House.

W. J. C. Frost has returned from New Guinea with a good collection of birds. Included were thirteen male Birds of Paradise, ten Great

and three King, twelve Crowned Pigeons, four Pleasing Lories, six Gold-crowned Bulbuls, etc. Needless to say none was available to private aviculturists !

On his return to America, Frank Buck writes : " I did not make the picture (They Kill to Live) while in Malaya. The Communists and Chinese gang robbers up in the jungle, north of Singapore, were too tough to attempt it. Hope to do it next Spring. But I did ship back a small shipment of animals and reptiles, some fine Hornbills, and a few other birds."

Peter Scott returned by air from the Arctic on 12th September. The expedition was wholly successful. Some two hundred square miles of tundra were put on the map ; much valuable data collected on the Wildfowl ; and the customs and mode of life of a little-known Eskimo tribe, the Kogmuits, studied. Six Ross's Snow Geese and two Tuie Geese were sent back ; the latter Goose probably never before seen in Europe.

A. A. P.

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## REVIEW

AUDUBON'S AMERICAN BIRDS. By SACHEVERELL SITWELL. B. T. Batsford, Ltd. 6*s.* 6*d.* net.

This is a welcome addition to the Batsford Colour Books Series. The sixteen coloured plates are representative of the five hundred water-colour paintings in Audubon's great work. Printed in the Netherlands by a new method, the originals are reproduced with complete fidelity. Twelve pages of Introduction and Notes have been contributed by Sacheverell Sitwell. He tells us little or nothing of Audubon that is new, but he presents his subject in a manner that assists the reader to appreciate Audubon and his work.

It is perhaps a pity that a full quarter of the very limited letterpress should be devoted to lost breeds of fighting cocks and famous cockers, Red Indian braves and Maori warriors, interesting though they are.

Under two pages are allotted to notes on the plates. In such a very limited space one does not expect to find many " inaccuracies ". It is all the more surprising, therefore, to read of the Summer or Wood Duck " The blue, and black and white feathers of its wing shafts put this Duck into the same category of quaint beauty as the Carolina and the Mandarin ". It seems hardly necessary to liken " *sponsa* " to " *sponsa* " !

A. A. P.

# NOTES

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Editor acknowledges with many thanks the invaluable assistance again given by Mr. R. C. Witting in compiling the index to subjects and list of contributors of the present volume of the Magazine.

ADDITIONS TO THE LONDON ZOO.

*August, 1949.*—The registered additions for the month were 161. Forty-two of these were hatched in the Gardens : 2 Little Owls, 1 Green-winged King Parrakeet, 3 Red-crested Pochards, 1 Night Heron, 1 Bob White, 10 Indian Chukors, 2 Common Peafowl, 1 Common Peafowl (white variety) ; Pheasants : 1 Black-breasted Kalij, 2 Mongolian, 2 Common (dark variety), 8 Reeves's, 5 Golden, 3 Lady Amherst's.

A collection of 68 Kenya birds was purchased : 2 Wattled Starlings (*Creatophora carunculata*), 11 Green Glossy Starlings (*Lamprocolius chalybeus*), 10 Superb Glossy Starlings (*Spreo superbus*), 15 Delamere's Giant Whydahs (*Diatropura progne delamerei*), 9 Grey-headed Social Weaver Birds (*Pseudonigrita arnaudi*), 2 Red-beaked Weaver Birds (*Quelea quelea*), 5 Reichenow's Weaver Birds (*Ploceus reichenowi*), 6 Chestnut Sparrows (*Sorella eminibey*), 1 Kenya Olive Thrush* (*Turdus olivaceus elgonensis* (Sharpe)), 1 Kenya Pied Babbler* (*Turdoides hypoleuca* (Cabanis)), and 6 Brown-capped Bulbuls* (*Pycnonotus tricolor* (Hartlaub)).

G. M. Durrell presented several birds from British Cameroons : 1 African Barn Owl* (*Tyto alba affinis* Blyth), 1 White-faced Scops Owl (*Ptilopis leucotis*), 1 Sjostedt's Barred Owlet* (*Glaucidium sjostedti* Reichenow), and 1 Chestnut-flanked Goshawk* (*Astur castanilius* (Bonaparte)).

Four Black Swans, sent to Mr. Churchill by the West Australian Government, were deposited for a short time.

*Whipsnade.*—2 Queen Alexandra's Parrakeets were presented by P. H. Maxwell, and 2 Ashy-headed Geese by A. Ezra. Six Great Black-backed Gulls were received in exchange, and 1 Quaker Parrakeet was bred in the Park.

*September, 1949.*—The new arrivals numbered forty-six. W. H. Chippendale presented several Brazilian birds, a Great Crested Cacique (*Ostinops decumanus*) and 5 Red-headed Cardinals. Four American White Pelicans, 2 American Robins, 1 Rosy-billed Duck, 1 Yellow-billed Duck, 2 Crested Ducks, 1 South African Sheld-Duck, and 2 Emperor Geese were received in exchange. The deposits included 1 Yellow-headed Marsh Bird* (*Agelaius icterocephalus* (Linnaeus)) and 5 Satin Bower Birds (*Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*). Six Grey-necked Crowned Cranes, 1 Pied Crow, and 1 Rosy-billed Duck were purchased.

*Whipsnade.*—There were 152 additions, of which the following were bred in the Park : Pheasants : 30 Golden, 14 Reeves's, 4 Lady Amherst's, 18 Pallas's Eared, 1 Impeyan, 1 Crimson Horned Tragopan, 3 Temminck's Tragopan, 3 Chinese Silver, 8 Ring-necked, 9 Common (dark variety), 2 Black-breasted Kalij ; 3 Red Jungle Fowl, and 1 Common Peafowl. The waterfowl included 4 Red-crested Pochard, 4 Mandarin, and 27 Carolina Ducks.

A Leadbeater's Cockatoo was presented by P. H. Maxwell. Two American Wigeon and 2 South African Sheld-Duck were purchased.

A. A. P.

GREY-NECKED PICATHARTES.

I was most interested in Mr. Webb's article on the Grey-necked Picathartes (*Picathartes Oreas*) in the last issue of the AVICULTURAL MAGAZINE, as I had some experience with this species in the summer of 1949, during my collecting trip to the British Cameroons.

My base camp was at Mamfe, approximately 70 miles north of Kumba, where Mr. Webb obtained his specimen. On the 25th July a native arrived from Eshobi, a small village some 4 miles north of Mamfe in the heart of the forest, with two young Picathartes, both of which were dead. They were both fully fledged, and had been

* New to the Collection.

taken from the same nest ; my notes, taken at the time, record that they did not differ from the adult in colouration, except that the bare skin on the head and neck was yellowish flushed with pink, in place of the vivid colouration of the adult bird. The colony from which these birds were taken was situated on an overhanging rock far in the forest, some miles from Eshobi.

The hunter returned on the 29th July with an adult Picathartes, together with the nest and two eggs on which it had been sitting. Both these eggs contained well-developed embryos. On the 30th another adult bird was brought in with its nest and two eggs, both of these, unfortunately, were badly cracked. These also contained embryos, though not in such an advanced state of development as the previous two. Thus it seems reasonably certain that these birds lay only two eggs ; whether the fact that both fully fledged young, *and* eggs, were found in the same colony indicates more than one brood is a moot point. Both the adult birds died in August of mycosis, within a few days of leaving Tiko. Both these proved to be female.

I may add that I have sent one fledgeling and an egg to the Natural History Museum.

GERALD M. DURRELL.

THE HAWAIIAN GOOSE : EARLY HISTORY IN ENGLAND.

It may be of interest to some readers to have Jean Delacour's opening remarks on page 130 amplified.

Sclater (*P.Z.S.*, 1880, 504) writes : " This species was originally based by Mr. Vigors on a pair of birds living in the Society's Gardens, to which they were presented by Lady Glengale in 1832 (see *P.Z.S.*, 1833, p. 63, and Rep. of Council, 1833, p. 13). In 1834 a pair was also received by Lord Derby at Knowsley (see *P.Z.S.*, 1834, p. 41). They bred in both places ; and in subsequent years our pair and their descendants bred frequently in the Society's Gardens." Sclater then lists 38 dates, ranging from 7th May, 1835, to 23rd May, 1871, on which this Goose was bred in the Gardens (see also Mitchell, *Zoo Garden Guide*, 1858, p. 15). The Earl of Derby appears to have been the first breeder as in *P.Z.S.*, 1834, 41, there is a note in which he describes how his female laid her first egg on 5th March, 1834, followed by three others on the 7th, 9th, and 11th. Two goslings were hatched on 13th April and one on the 14th. Two soon died, but the third flourished, and in *P.Z.S.*, 1834, 81, we read that " it is now fully as large as the parents, and nearly resembles them in plumage ".

Five home-bred birds were included in the Knowsley Sale, 1851, teste the Sale Catalogue.

A. A. P.

BREEDING RECORDS OF JAYS.

Derek Goodwin's graphic description of the nesting of his Jays caused me to refer to my *Breeding Records*. I find I have only two entries. Wesley T. Page includes it in his *Species which have reared young* (1914) without, of course, any reference. Dr. W. T. Greene, *British Birds for Cages and Aviaries*, p. 122 (1899) says :

" The writer is acquainted with a case in which a pair of tame Jays nested successfully in an aviary (see Frontispiece, from a photograph by Mr. W. Bush, F.C.S.) ; and that such naturally shy birds should have done so under such circumstances says much for their owner's management and treatment . . . " The photograph is titled " Jay sitting on nest in aviary ".

The foregoing are far from satisfactory. It is quite possible there are other records and I would be interested to learn of any.

A. A. P.

* * *

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* Denotes a coloured plate.

Fold Here

What feeding stuffs are used during present difficult times ? Are birds in good condition ?

---

Do you require fresh stock or have you any surplus for disposal ? If so, please indicate sex, species, etc.

---

Please give names and addresses of any non-members you know of who keep these birds.

Fold Here

---

What number of young are reared from each clutch of eggs laid (give number of eggs laid in each case). If low fertility to what do you attribute the cause ?

---

Are your pens in good state of repair ? If not, what materials do you find most difficult to obtain ?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Long-tailed Pheasants** | | | |
| Reeves' ... ... ... | | | |
| Elliot's ... ... ... | | | |
| Mikado ... ... ... | | | |
| Copper ... ... ... | | | |
| **Impeyan Pheasant** | | | |
| **Cheer Pheasant** | | | |
| **Tragopan Pheasants** | | | |
| Temminck's ... ... | | | |
| Blyth's ... ... ... | | | |
| Cabot's ... ... ... | | | |
| Satyr ... ... ... | | | |
| **Crested Fireback Pheasants** | | | |
| Siamese ... ... ... | | | |
| Malayan ... ... ... | | | |
| Bornean ... ... ... | | | |
| **Crestless Fireback Pheasants** | | | |
| Malayan ... ... ... | | | |
| Bornean ... ... ... | | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Black-shouldered ... ... | | | |
| White ... ... ... | | | |
| **Junglefowl** | | | |
| Sonnerat's ... ... ... | | | |
| Javan ... ... ... | | | |
| Ceylon ... .. ... | | | |
| Red ... ... ... | | | |
| Any other species not listed here. | | | |
| **Hybrids** | | | |

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Date.....

Kindly complete this form and return as over not later than December 31st, 1949.

[P.T.O.

THE AVICULTURAL SOCIETY.

# PHEASANT REGISTRY 1949.

| SPECIES | NUMBER MALE | FEMALE | UNSEXED |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Golden Pheasants** | | | |
| Golden, Pure ... ... | | | |
| „ Impure ... ... | | | |
| Lady Amherst's, Pure ... | | | |
| „ „ Impure ... | | | |
| **Kaleege Pheasants** | | | |
| Silver ... ... ... | | | |
| Bel's ... ... ... | | | |
| Lineated ... ... ... | | | |
| Horsfield's ... ... ... | | | |
| White-crested ... ... | | | |
| Black-backed ... ... | | | |
| Black-crested (Nepal) ... | | | |
| Swinhoe's ... ... ... | | | |
| Edwards' ... ... ... | | | |
| Imperial ... ... ... | | | |
| **Long-tailed Pheasants** | | | |
| Reeves' ... ... ... | | | |
| Elliot's ... ... ... | | | |
| Mikado ... ... ... | | | |

| SPECIES | NUMBER MALE | FEMALE | UNSEXED |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Eared Pheasants** | | | |
| Brown ... ... ... | | | |
| Blue ... ... ... | | | |
| White ... ... ... | | | |
| **Peacock Pheasants** | | | |
| Germain's ... ... .. | | | |
| Grey ... .. ... | | | |
| Palawan ... ... ... | | | |
| Bronze-tailed ... ... | | | |
| **Argus Pheasants** | | | |
| Malayan ... ... ... | | | |
| Bornean ... ... ... | | | |
| Crested ... ... ... | | | |
| **Peafowl** | | | |
| Indian ... ... ... | | | |
| Specifer ... ... ... | | | |
| Black-shouldered ... ... | | | |
| White ... ... ... | | | |
| **Junglefowl** | | | |

Fold Here

Stamp.

To George A. J. Weaver, F.Z S.,

77, Offmore Road,

Kidderminster,

Worcs.

Fold Here

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Capt. Peter Jackson, to Bourne Farm, Upper Dicker, Nr. Hailsham, Sussex.

Carl-Ivar Strömgren, to Maison Suédoise, Cité Universitaire, Paris (14e).

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